

oxidation-resistant film on the cap layer such that "an oxidation-resistant conductive layer is interposed between said cap layer and said overhang part." By minimizing the oxidation of the cap layer, the contact resistance of the electrodes is minimized. Among other things, claim 1 recites the feature of the overlay type MR sensor in the fifth paragraph, "said electrodes having respective overhang parts extending over said magneto-resistive structure...."

In such an overlay type MR sensor, in which the detecting current is injected into the MR structure from the top surface thereof, it is essential that the contact resistance between the MR structure and the electrodes provided on the top surface of the MR structure be minimized.

Chen, on the other hand, teaches an MR sensor of an abutting type in which the detecting current is injected through a lateral surface of the MR structure. It is noted that the MR structure of Chen does carry a Ta cap layer (165), but this Ta cap layer is covered with an insulator layer (170), and the current injection is made laterally from the lateral electrodes having a stacked structure of Ta and Au. There is no electrode formed in contact with the top surface of the MR structure, nor any conductive oxidation-resistant film interposed between the top surface of the MR structure and the overhand electrode. For these reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 2-7 are allowable for the reasons given with respect to claim 1.

For the foregoing reasons, applicant believes that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicant's attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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